



## STATE OF MICHIGAN

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### **Lawmakers announce MI-Forests plan to grow northern Michigan jobs**

**LANSING** – Legislation to strengthen Michigan’s forest industry and help grow the economy was unveiled today by Senate and House lawmakers at news conferences across Michigan.

Sen. Tony Stamas and Reps. Kevin Elsenheimer, Howard Walker and Darwin Booher announced the initiative in Grayling at Weyerhaeuser, an international forest products company. News conferences also took place in Iron Mountain and Muskegon County.

“The forest industry is an extremely important contributor to northern Michigan’s economy,” said Stamas, R-Midland. “Jobs are our number one concern and the legislation in this package will help create and retain forest industry jobs.”

The MI-Forests package aims to encourage private timber management through tax incentives and open more state timber resources for industry use.

“Northern Michigan job markets and local economies can be strengthened by encouraging the wise use of our natural resources, such as our forests,” said Elsenheimer, R-Bellaire. “This package will help Michigan help itself with the abundant raw production material we have close at hand.”

The legislation will:

- Review and/or abolish the Department of Natural Resources’ factor limitations that prevent timber harvesting on certain state lands;
- Clarify and update portions of state law which encourage companies to allow public recreation access to woodland holdings in exchange for decreased tax assessments;
- Encourage private landowners to implement forest management plans through tax incentives; and
- Provide tax incentives to the forest products industry to invest in and expand operations.

-More-

“My legislation for forest renaissance zones will remove obstacles to locating forest industry businesses in Michigan and make it more attractive for new companies to locate close to an abundant supply of quality resources,” said Walker, R-Traverse City.

The forest industry employs approximately 200,000 Michigan workers and contributes \$12 billion to the state’s economy each year.

“The forest industry is a valuable part of Michigan’s economic picture,” said Booher, R-Evart. “With the help of this package, the industry can thrive and help bring additional jobs to our communities.”

Michigan timberland acreage is the fifth largest in the nation with 19 million acres.

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